

**IRS UNIFIES MANAGEMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE,
SUBMISSION PROCESSING SITES NATIONWIDE**

WASHINGTON B To improve service to taxpayers, the Internal Revenue Service will unify customer service operations at 25 telephone and correspondence sites across the nation into one management structure.

The new organization B covering customer service operations at existing IRS Service Center and District sites nationwide B will create a clearer line of management authority designed to improve taxpayer service. The change is effective immediately.

The new Customer Service Center organization will be headquartered in Atlanta and includes a national call management center. As part of this realignment, responsibility for overseeing Submission Processing activities at the IRS=s 10 Service Centers will remain in Cincinnati.

AThis realignment is a major step toward modernizing the IRS business structure,@ IRS Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti said Friday. AThis change will focus management of each group on what it does best B processing tax returns or providing interactive customer service.@"

AThis change will help us improve service to taxpayers, through such things as routing calls to where we have trained people available and by adopting best-quality management practices more quickly,@ Rossotti said.

The Submission Processing sites will specialize in issues involving tax processing, including areas involving tax forms, payments and deposits.

The Customer Service sites will specialize in assisting taxpayers. By telephone and correspondence, IRS employees at these sites will interact with taxpayers, helping them on matters ranging from understanding the tax laws to resolving problems with their accounts.

Telephone operations formerly managed by IRS District offices will now be unified in the Customer Service organization. This reflects the IRS=s increased emphasis on telephone communications with taxpayers via toll-free numbers.

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Placing all telephone operations under the Customer Service umbrella allows the IRS to standardize procedures and helps position the agency to implement new technology faster.

^This type of customer-oriented specialization will help us transform the IRS into an agency that responds to the needs of taxpayers,@ Rossotti said. ^In the long run, people will see benefits from improved service and greater efficiency.@"

In the short term, the management changes at the new sites will be internal, and they should be transparent for taxpayers and tax practitioners doing business with the IRS. For IRS employees, the management change will have no impact on the number of jobs.

In the future, the agency plans other major changes for the Customer Service and Submission Processing sites. The Customer Service and Submission Processing operations located at five Service Centers will be dedicated to serving individual taxpayers through the new Wage and Investment Division. The remaining sites will be dedicated to taxpayers served by the Small Business and Self-Employed Division.

The realignment will take place at call sites and at 10 Service Centers across the nation: Andover (Mass.), Atlanta, Austin, Brookhaven (N.Y.), Cincinnati, Fresno, Kansas City, Memphis, Philadelphia and Ogden (Utah).

The series of changes forms part of the broader IRS modernization effort. The IRS is shifting from a geographic-based organization in 33 local Districts to a customer-based structure built around four major groups of taxpayers.

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